



Subject: Interim appointment of Executive Director – Property & Housing Assets

Report to: Council - 18 May 2023

Report by: Sarah Tate, Head of Organisational Development

SUBJECT MATTER

To seek approval of the interim appointment of Chris Furlong as Executive Director – Property & Housing Assets.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Agree to the interim appointment of Chris Furlong as Executive Director – Property & Housing Assets to 31st March 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Under the Council’s Constitution (Article 45 – Officer Employment Procedure Rules) the appointment of any chief officer shall be by resolution of the Council on the recommendation of the Employment Committee.
- 1.2. An offer of employment as a Chief Officer shall only be made where no well-founded objection from any Member of the Council has been received.
- 1.3. Due to the difficult recruitment market and the seniority of this post the Council were supported by Penna during the process. The post was advertised internally and externally through relevant media channels, including the MJ, Penna, various recruitment websites, social media, LinkedIn and a bespoke microsite on the Council’s web pages. Penna undertook a head-hunting exercise and identified 85 potential candidates, 14 applications were received, 3 candidates were longlisted, 1 withdrew from the process and 2 attended a technical interview and assessment centre.
- 1.4. The whole assessment process included CV and covering letter, an assessment centre which included a technical interview, chairing of an ELT meeting and a meeting with heads of service. Insights profiles were also undertaken for each candidate.
- 1.5. Following the assessment centre there were no suitable candidates to take through to employment committee, which was due to be held on 21st March 2023.
- 1.6. A review of the recruitment process and candidate market was undertaken by the Chief Executive, Penna and the Head of Organisational Development and options considered for the

next steps in the process and whether or not it would be appropriate to go back out the market at this point, having already identified the significant difficulties recruiting to the post.

- 1.7. After discussions and careful considerations it was felt that an interim solution and appointment to this role would be appropriate at this time and that recruitment to the post of a permanent basis should be reconsidered later in the year.
- 1.8. Chris Furlong is currently working for the Council in a dual role with GYN and is considered as an ideal candidate to take on this role on an interim basis, to allow for the completion of the GYN options appraisal report which will evaluate the options for the future service delivery beyond the end of the current contract arrangements with GYN.
- 1.9. Chris has extensive experience in Assets and Property and is currently working on a number of projects for the council including the delivery of the Compliance Improvement Plan following the Regulatory Judgement in October, a transformational change of the GYN service, the development of the Council's Housing Investment Plan and a review of the Council's Sheltered Housing Asset portfolio. In addition to this and following the Options Appraisal of GYN services, there will need to be a mobilisation plan for the new service which will require expertise and experience in this area. Chris recently led on the insourcing of the Norse JV at Norwich City Council. Further, there is a need to review and transform the Commercial Property side of the Council and Chris has many years' experience in transformational change.
- 1.10. This interim appointment gives the Council the time and opportunity to successfully recruit a permanent candidate.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. The salary range and market supplement applicable to this role is within the budgeted salary range and contained within the Councils approved Pay Policy Statement. The Executive Director – Property & Housing Assets is budgeted for on the current establishment and it is anticipated that the vacancy will be used to cover the interim appointment.

3. Risk Implications

- 3.1. The risks of not appointing an interim is that the key projects identified at 1.9 may not be delivered on time or to the quality that the Council would expect.
- 3.2. Further, if the post remains vacant for any length of time, the capacity of the ELT is reduced in a portfolio of services that are undergoing significant change

4. Conclusion

An extensive and thorough recruitment process was undertaken, which did not provide a suitable permanent candidate for the role. The interim recommendations will allow the council time to ensure there is effective management in place, continue to ensure service delivery is maintained in this area and to progress with recruitment of a permanent candidate.

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Constitution
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Identified within report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	Identified within report
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	N/A